



The Connecticut Women's Health Campaign

African American Affairs
Commission
American Heart Association
Celebrate Women at UCONN Health
Center
Children's Health Council
CT Association for Human Services
CT Association of School
Based Health Care
CT Breast Cancer Coalition, Inc.
CT Children's Health Project
CT Chronic Fatigue Immune
Dysfunction and
Fibromyalgia Assoc.
CT Citizen's Action Group
CT Coalition Against
Domestic Violence
CT Coalition for Choice
CT Community Care, Inc.
CT Legal Rights Project
CT NARAL
CT NOW
CT Sexual Assault Crisis Services
CT Women and Disability
Network, Inc.
CT Women's Consortium, Inc.
Disability Services, City of
New Haven
Hartford College for Women
Institute for Community Research
Latino and Puerto Rican
Affairs Commission
National Association of Social
Workers-CT Chapter
National Council of Jewish Women
National Ovarian Cancer
Coalition CT
Office for Women in Medicine,
Yale University
Older Women's League of NWCT
Permanent Commission on the
Status of Women
Planned Parenthood of CT, Inc.
Quinnipiac University Department
of Nursing
Ruthe Boyea Women's Center,
Central CT State University
UConn School of Allied Health
UConn Women's Center
Urban League of Greater
Hartford, Inc.
Valley Women's Health
Access Program
Women & Family Life Center

CONNECTICUT WOMEN'S HEALTH CAMPAIGN

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Nutrition Counseling and Therapy

The Connecticut Women's Health Campaign (CWHC) supports coverage of medically necessary Medical Nutrition Therapy (MNT), which can be used to treat a wide variety of diseases and conditions and can help reduce the overall cost of health care.

The Problem

- Because coverage is inconsistent among insurance plans, deferred care can result which in turn ultimately increases the cost of health care and increases morbidity and mortality in Connecticut women. The CWHC supports coverage for MNT as part of its goal to improve the health of women in Connecticut.

What Can Be Done?

- The Connecticut Women's Health Campaign supports requiring insurers to provide medically necessary coverage for Medical Nutrition Therapy for any medically necessary condition authorized by a physician including, but not limited to: hypertension, hypercholesterolemia, hypertriglyceridemia, obesity, morbid obesity, eating disorders, inflammatory bowel disease, gastro-esophageal reflux disease, chronic renal insufficiency, cancer, HIV, unexplained weight loss, malnutrition, malabsorption, prenatal nutrition care, enteral nutrition support and parenteral nutrition support.

The Facts

- Medical Nutrition Therapy is nutritional diagnostic, therapy and counseling services for the purpose of disease management that are furnished by a registered dietitian or nutrition professional pursuant to a referral by a physician.
- MNT can ultimately bring down the cost of health care as shown by studies commissioned by the American Dietetic Association and the Department of Defense.

How is MNT cost effective?

Research demonstrates the cost-effectiveness of medical nutrition therapy:

- Oxford Health Plan ¹ saved \$10 for every \$1 spent on nutrition counseling for at risk elderly patients. Monthly costs for Medicare claims alone tumbled from \$66,000 before the nutrition program to \$45,000 afterwards. As a result, the health plan continued use of nutrition screenings.
- The Lewin Group ² documented an 8.6% reduction in hospital utilization and 16.9% reduction in physician visits associated with Medical Nutrition Therapy for patients with cardiovascular disease.
- The Lewin Group ² additionally documented a 9.5% reduction in hospital utilization and 23.5% reduction in physician visits when Medical Nutrition Therapy was provided to persons with diabetes mellitus.
- The University of California Irvine ³ demonstrated lipid drug eligibility was obviated in 34 of 67 subjects, the estimated annual cost savings from the avoidance of lipid medication was \$60,652.
- Pfizer Corporation ⁴ projected \$728,772 in annual savings from reduced cardiac claims of their employees from an on-site nutrition/exercise intervention program.
- U.S. Department of Defense ⁵ saved \$3.1 million in the first year of a nutrition therapy program utilizing Registered Dietitians counseling 636,222 patients with cardiovascular disease, diabetes and renal disease.

For additional information, contact:

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Sources

¹ Oxford Health Plan's pilot nutrition screening program applied to Medicare population in New York, between 1991-1993.

² Johnson, Rachel. The Lewin Group - What does it tell us, and why does it matter? Journal of the American Dietetic Association. 1999, 99:426-427.

³ Sikland, G et al. Medical Nutrition Therapy lowers serum cholesterol and saves medication costs in Medicare populations with hypercholesterolemia. Journal of the American Dietetic Association. 1998, 98:889-894.

⁴ Pfizer Corp., Lipid Intervention Program, <http://healthproject.stanford.edu/koop/pfizer99/documentation.html>. Accessed 2/16/01.

⁵ The Cost of Covering Medical Nutrition Therapy Services under TRICARE: Benefits Costs, Cost Avoidance and Savings. Final report prepared by the Lewin Group, Inc. for the Department of Defense Health Affairs, 11/15/98.

